

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed and considered the Office Action mailed on May 7, 2003, and the references cited therewith.

No claims are amended, canceled, or added in this response; as a result, claims 1-23 remain pending in this application.

*§103 Rejection of the Claims*

The rejection of claims 1-23 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tabuchi (US 5,822,583) in view of Ruckdashel (US 6,038,542) was maintained. A declaration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 showing facts supporting an earlier conception date than the effective date of the Ruckdashel reference, coupled with diligence and constructive reduction to practice is provided herewith. The declaration swearing behind the Ruckdashel reference is believed to overcome each of the rejections.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney (612-373-6954) to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0439.

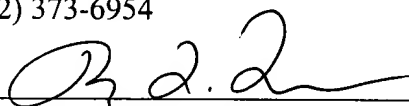
Respectfully submitted,

LARRY A. NICKUM

By their Representatives,

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Date July 7, 2003

By   
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Reg. No. 41,136

CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on this 7th day of July, 2003.

Rodney L. Lacy  
Name

  
Signature